

**Testimony of Marta Daniels in Support of SB 294 w/ HSA Amendments:
An Act Prohibiting the Sale of Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn in the State
March 6, 2020**

To the Co-Chairs Christine Cohen and Michael Demicco, Vice-Chairs, and distinguished members of the Joint Environment Committee, CT State Legislature:

My name is Marta Daniels of Chester CT, and I support **S.B. 294, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF IVORY AND RHINOCEROS HORN IN THE STATE**. I urge the Committee and legislature to pass this bill *with amendments that close loopholes, as raised by the Humane Society of America (HSA)*.

Second chances are rare, third chances even more so. Twice in the last six years, Connecticut has had an ivory ban bill up for consideration. Twice it has been left to die without a vote or with poison pill amendments that defeated its intent: to save the elephants.

Once again, with SB 294, we have a chance to repay our historic debt to elephants by joining NY and NJ and the federal government in passing a true ivory sales ban law.

Our old debt to the elephants was incurred when up to *a million elephants* were slaughtered for *our piano keyboard industry* (1840-1940) out of Deep River and Essex. No other state in the nation bears a greater responsibility for the demise of the elephant than Connecticut. Our debt will continue to go unpaid if lawmakers succumb to pressure from some in the antiques industry who want exemptions to sell “antique” ivory.

Any legal exemption for selling ivory creates *value*, which sustains *demand*. Demand perpetuates *poaching*, which currently destroys 35,000 elephants a year—an extinction death-rate. Since new ivory is easily faked for old, giving antique exemptions is like giving a green light to poachers.

As an antiques dealer of 30 years, I am certain the majority of us would not be harmed by an ivory sales ban. Connecticut’s bill allows selling antiques containing 20% or less ivory (furniture, musical instruments, antique firearms), adequately covering *most* antique dealers. Rightfully, only museums and historical societies will be able to acquire old ivory for education and preservation purposes. It is also important to note that SB 294 would NOT criminalize possession of ivory currently owned by Connecticut residents, nor prohibit inheritance or noncommercial gifts.

Despite federal laws restricting wildlife trafficking, ivory and other illicit products continue to be smuggled into state markets. **Therefore, we must have state laws to compliment federal laws and close loopholes.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service states a significant amount of elephant ivory continues to be illegally imported. They also say federal law does not regulate commercial activities that occur entirely within a state. SB 294, with Humane Society amendments would close intrastate loopholes, and make law enforcement’s job easier by complimenting federal action.

We can't change the past, only the future. Lawmakers should embrace a third chance for Connecticut and elephants—and vote to save a species rather than the profits of a few.

Marta Daniels
Chester, CT

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